

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for a vendor to dispense ~~dispensing~~ postage in response to a transaction request received by a postage vendor over the Internet ~~from~~ to a customer over a network, the method comprising the steps of:

obtaining a meter license from the Post, said meter license being associated with a meter account assigned to the ~~postage~~ vendor, said meter account being maintained at a data center;

receiving, via the network, a transaction request for postage from a customer, said transaction request including information from the customer, said information corresponding to the transaction requested and payment method;

processing the requested transaction by requesting the data center to create ~~creating~~ evidence of postage payment and to account for the created evidence of postage payment in the meter account assigned to the vendor;

effecting payment for the transaction based on the information received from the customer;

~~accounting for the created evidence of postage payment in the meter account assigned to the postage meter vendor~~ receiving the evidence of postage payment created by the data center; and

sending the evidence of postage payment to the customer.

2. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

determining an origin of deposit postal code for the requested transaction.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the information ~~received~~ from the customer includes a username, password and credit card information whereby a personal account is established for subsequent transactions.

Claims 4-8 (Cancelled)

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, wherein the origin of deposit postal code is included in the information ~~received~~ from the customer.

10. (Currently Amended) A method for a ~~postage~~ vendor to dispense postage via a network comprising:

receiving a request for postage from a customer;

processing the request for postage by requesting a data center to create
~~creating~~ evidence of postage payment and to account; ~~accounting~~ for the created
evidence of postage payment in a postal account assigned to the ~~postage~~ vendor;
and

sending the evidence of postage payment to the customer via the network.

11. (Previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the evidence of postage payment includes a transaction number.

12. (Previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein receiving a request for postage from a customer further comprises:

receiving information to identify the customer.

13. (Previously presented) The method of claim 12, wherein the information to identify the customer includes at least one of a user name and a password.

14. (New) A system for dispensing postage over the Internet to any PC for printing, the system comprising:

a data center accessible over the Internet;

at least one metering account licensed to a vendor and maintained at the data center;

means at the data center for receiving over the Internet a request for postage, the request being initiated by a customer of the vendor;

means at the data center for generating evidence of postage payment in response to the request for postage; and

means at the data center for accounting for the generated evidence of postage payment in the metering account licensed to the vendor.